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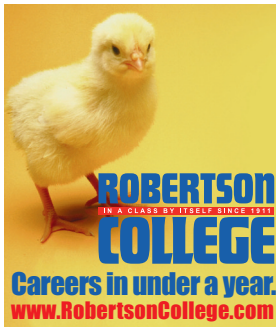

Minister halts bed closures

HEALTH Alberta's beleaguered Conservative government is halting some unpopular bed closures at hospitals in Edmonton and Calgary — the second major reversal this week.

The province's health superboard had announced in September that about 300 acute-care beds would be closed to help reduce a $1-billion deficit.

But Premier Ed Stelmach shuffled his cabinet recently in the face of nose-diving polls, and now his new health minister, Gene Zwozdesky, is living up to his reputation as a fixer who moves quickly.

Zwozdesky ordered the superboard yesterday not to proceed with the bed closures. THE CANADIAN PRESS

News on the Move

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Vancouver Games

Countdown to 2010

Follow Metro as we bring you daily coverage leading up to the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

• Today — Unlike Cypress Mountain on Vancouver's North Shore, Whistler's Olympic venues are ready, page 16

On the web

Visit metronews.ca for news updates

Canada Olympic Park

Down the halfpipe

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver 2010 torchbearer Tyler MacRae snowboards down the halfpipe with the Olympic flame yesterday at Canada Olympic Park, site of the bobsled, luge and ski-jumping events at the 1988 Calgary Olympics. Story, page 3

Charges in horse death

Boy, two men accused in one of a series of shootings

Charges have been laid after a three-year investigation by Alberta RCMP into a series of wild-horse killings in the Rocky Mountain foothills near Sundre.

And police hope further charges in the other horse killings are soon to follow.

"We're still investigating each and every one of these instances," said RCMP spokesman Sgt. Patrick Webb yesterday.

"None of the files have been closed and we have expectations that we will be able to resolve some of the other ones with more evidence."

Two men and a boy face charges under the Criminal Code and Alberta's Wildlife Act in the shooting of a wild horse last year. It was one of nearly 30 seemingly random shootings since the early 1990s of wild horses in the area, with bodies being left in the bush.

The latest shooting happened last April when three horses near a road were shot by someone using a high-powered rifle.

The investigation by police and Alberta Fish and Wildlife officers was made more difficult by the rough, remote terrain in which the shootings occurred.

Jason Nixon, 29, and Earl Anderson, 40, as well as a 13-year-old boy are to appear in court in Didsbury, Alta., on March 1. All three are from the Sundre area.

Nixon has also been charged with threatening and obstructing a Fish and Wildlife officer in connection with a poaching and trespassing investigation.

Police say charges are pending against a third man from the Calgary area. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Reward?

• A $25,000 reward was offered to anyone who gives information leading to an arrest. There was no word yesterday if the reward had been claimed.

Quake aftershock provokes more panic in Haiti

Haiti Crisis

TREMOR A frightening new aftershock yesterday forced more earthquake survivors onto the capital's streets to live and sent others fleeing to the countryside, where aid was only beginning to reach wrecked towns.

A flotilla of rescue vessels, meanwhile, led by the U.S. hospital ship Comfort, converged on Port-au-Prince harbour to help fill gaps in still-lagging global efforts to deliver water, food and medical help. Hundreds of thousands of survivors of Haiti's cataclysmic earthquake were living in makeshift tents or on blankets and plastic sheets.

It's the strongest tremor since the Jan. 12 quake struck at 6:03 a.m. EST while many still slept. From a hillside tent city to the teeming plaza near the collapsed presidential palace, the 5.9-magnitude aftershock lasted only seconds, but panicked thousands.

"Jesus!" the Haitians cried as rubble tumbled and dust rose anew from government buildings around the plaza. Parents gathered up children and ran.

A slow vibration intensified into side-to-side shaking that lasted about eight seconds — compared to last week's far-stronger initial quake that seemed to go on for 30 seconds and registered 7.0 magnitude. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MORE COVERAGE, PAGES 5, 6 & 9

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Local

United Way seeks photographers

The United Way of Calgary 2335 group is looking for Calgary shutterbugs in their 20s and 30s for Urban Exposure Project: Poverty in Our Community. The project provides those with an interest in photography an opportunity to explore poverty through volunteerism and by documenting the learning through imagery. For more information email info@2335.ca or visit calgaryunitedway.org/volunteer. Deadline for participants is Friday. METRO CALGARY

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News in brief

OFF-LEASH The Land Use, Planning and Transportation committee approved a recommendation to include off-leash dog areas as one of several potential uses within municipal reserve lands and included in future area structure plans.
METRO CALGARY

Following news stories on Twitter...

CalgaryTweets

@phoenixonair OK, time to break out the winter gloves & scarf...seems as if winter has returned to Calgary...Chinooks were good while they lasted...
@Martychan13 Stephen Duckett, when your new boss reverses your decisions, start updating your resume. #ableg

metronews.ca

WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Blogs Among the criticism of the world's response in Haiti, Spindoctor also sees plenty that has been done well.

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49: 13,17, 25, 40, 45 & 47 Bonus 42
These results are not official.

Nostalgia at torch parade

KRISTA SYLVESTER
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Flickering isn't the right word to describe the flame that still burns in the hearts of Calgarians.

Hundreds of cars lined 16 Avenue NW as drivers stood on their cars with cellphones and cameras to glimpse the Olympic torch parade as it left Canada Olympic Park — and most didn't mind the wait.

"Wow. This is amazing and totally unexpected. I was just taking the kids to their grandparents and now we got to see the torch," said Sandra Davis.

Olympic downhill skier Jan Hudec was late for training at the park because of the traffic jam, but he didn't mind. "This is actually the third time I have accidentally come across the torch in Calgary in the past couple days, so maybe it's a good sign," he said.

Inside the park, 6,000 people celebrated among an abundance of retro jackets and shared memories. For '88 torchbearer Maureen Gerber, it was an emotional moment.

"I think it's amazing and so exciting. I get teared up just talking about it. I think it's a really nostalgic moment for a lot of people," she said.

COP spokesperson Stewart McDonough ran with the torch and said the atmosphere at the park was electric: "This is really the past and the present of the Olympics and it's really a special moment for everyone."

JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Torchbearer Stewart McDonough carries the Vancouver 2010 Olympic flame up a chairlift yesterday at Canada Olympic Park, site of several events at the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

Committee approves standby tow trucks at traffic hot spots

TRANSPORT Incident hotspots on major roadways are one step closer to having tow trucks on standby after a city committee approved their use.

The Land Use, Planning and Transportation committee approved recommendations to city council that one-time funding of $636,000 be taken from the city's fiscal sustainability reserve for the year long pilot-project that would see tow trucks stationed at select locations on main commuter arteries to quickly clear traffic incidents.

Aldermen did grapple with the cost to taxpayers if the program were to be included in the regular operational budget.

"I'm uncomfortable with the idea of the taxpayer paying," said Ald. John Mar,

City administration was asked to bring back provisions for cost recovery, along with a report on the pilot project in January 2011.

Previous standby tow truck pilot projects have proven successful at improving the response to traffic, according to administration. The decision made at committee will still need to be approved at a regular council meeting.
DARREN KRAUSE/METRO CALGARY

Proposed locations

- Crowchild Trail NW crossing Bow River
- Memorial Drive between Deerfoot and Edmonton Trails
- Macleod Trail from Anderson Road to 162 Avenue
- Glenmore Trail between Crowchild Trail and 14 Street SW
- Deerfoot Trail corridor

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CALGARY OBITUARIES

CalgaryObits.com notes the following deaths in our community:

ARLETTE, Deborah
BEAMISH, Elvamae (Mae)
BELIVEAU, Edith Rachel
BELYEA, Michael "Mike" Earle
BENDICSON, Charles (Chuck)
BLAIR, Lois Anne Wedderburn
BLAKE , Glen Lee Matthew
BLAYNEY, Alan John
BOISVERT , Donald Neil (Don)
BROWN, Barbara Jean
BROWN, Frederick "Fred"
CLARK, Kenneth Russell
CUSANO, Maria Teresa (nee Pietraroia)
DALGLEISH, Mary Camilla
DAVIS , Charles (Chuck)
DOCKERY, William (Bill)
GORDON, John Cuthbert
GREER, Gladys L.
HOLLOHAN, Brian
HOOD, Margaret Edith (nee Dunsmore)
KENNIE, Garnet
KOSTEL, Walter (Wally) Andrew
LEVESQUE, Steven (Steve) Guy
MAHONEY, Rosella Marie Louise (nee Laisnez)
McMURRAY, Frederick James (Jim)
PAYNE, Lois Emma
PETRILLO, Mario
RICHARDSON, Edward Charles
ROPPEL, Debora
SCHWEERTMAN, Bruce Albert
SOMMERFELD, Stephen
STINSON, Gwendolyn Louise
SVENDSEN, John Agner Erik
THOMPSON, Hilda Elizabeth
WOJCIK, Valerie Lyda Doreen

For full obituaries go to CalgaryObits.com

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Police withholding two victims' names in confirmed homicides

Calgary police confirmed 17-year-old Brittney McInnes' death was the city's second reported murder of the year but will not release her cause of death at this time for investigative reasons. Police also confirm a 59-year-old man found inside a black SUV was also murdered but are withholding his name and cause of death. METRO CALGARY

Metis Trail to stay an expressway

COMMITTEE Backed by support from area citizens, aldermen on the Land Use, Planning and Transportation committee declined an administration recommendation to downgrade the classification of Metis Trail NE between 64 Ave and 96 Ave NE to a modified arterial from expressway status.

The expressway classification maintains higher speed limits, interchanges and limits exits, allowing for a "high-speed, high capacity" roadway in the northeast.

METRO CALGARY

Mason takes up senior's cause

RESTITUTION NDP Leader Brian Mason is defending a 75-year-old Calgary woman fighting attempts by the provincial government to seize her condo.

Patricia Thomson's son allegedly used her condo address in a fraud scheme and the government is trying to use the Victims Restitution Act against her. METRO CALGARY

Women's cancer fight grows

Popular weekend fundraiser launches 'new' battleground

KRISTA SYLVESTER
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To the sounds of "let's get physical" about 20 men and women came together at Southcentre Mall in pink leggings and headbands to launch the "new" weekend to end cancer.

This year marks the official launch of the newly named Shoppers Drug Mart Weekend to End Women's Cancers and the participants in yesterday's mini aerobics class sweated to the oldies in front of dozens of mall shoppers.

"It was lot of fun and it's for a really good cause," instructor Lauren Thompson said.

"Usually we teach dance classes so it was fun to teach just regular people."

Cancer survivor and three-year walk participant Lorna Mutzbauer did her best aerobics moves and was happy to see so many people involved.

"It's really touching to know there are so many people involved with the organization and raising money and today was a lot of fun to see everyone out, too," she said. "I know why I am here but it's nice to see other people who aren't necessarily personally affected here, too."

KRISTA SYLVESTER/METRO CALGARY

Vlatko Jarc gets dressed up in pink for a good cause yesterday at Southcentre Mall as he gets down with an impromptu aerobics class for the launch of the Shoppers Drug Mart Weekend to End Women's Cancers.

"It's really touching to know there are so many people involved with the organization and raising money ... I know why I am here but it's nice to see other people who aren't necessarily personally affected here, too."
Cancer survivor Lorna Mutzbauer

Linda Mickelson, CEO of the Alberta Cancer Foundation said she is excited about the new partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart.

"I think around this time of year a lot of people are thinking about their health and getting back in shape so we thought this impromptu aerobics class is fitting," she added.

Health panel wants to see patient charter

REVIEW A government-appointed review panel is recommending a patient charter be created to guide Albertans on what to expect from the health system.

The 16-member government-appointed panel has also recommended that an Alberta health act be created that would "reflect a publicly funded health system that is accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay."

Review panel co-chair Deborah Prowse says many Albertans feel left out when it comes to making important decisions about health care.

"We heard again and again that people feel they aren't being adequately consulted about their health services or directions taken by the health system."

The panel spent a year gathering data mainly through an Internet survey which brought in nearly 1,800 responses.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Feeling constrained?

Road manager wary of starting contracted snow removal early

DARREN KRAUSE
darren.krause@metronews.ca

Snow removal by private contractors on problem secondary and residential streets could come ahead of schedule — but the manager of roads maintenance wants to ensure the project is done right.

Ald. Dale Hodges queried roads maintenance manager Dean Bell, during yesterday's Land Use Planning and Transportation committee meeting on whether his department could expedite the private contract supplementary snow removal for the spring snowfall.

The initial report to committee indicated the contracts could be awarded for May, with work slated to go ahead the following fall.

Bell said while they may be able to get private contractor snow-clearing proposals back on time to "test-drive" the project in March or April, he's wary of pushing the process too quickly.

"The last thing we want is to pilot the project and because of a regulation or a safety issue ... these are things that will put it to a stop pretty quickly," Bell said.

Bell said private contractors could provide a valuable service in clearing up transit trouble spots and high collision locations on approximately 500 kilometres of roads in priority three and four areas.

Pilot project

- In November, council approved $2 million over two years for a pilot project to have private contractors to provide supplementary snow removal on problem routes.

Calgary in brief

WARNING The Alberta government is warning Calgary-area homeowners about a man operating as a general contractor despite 24 charges against him for violations of Alberta's consumer protection legislation. Service Alberta continues to receive complaints about Samuel Bogale who they say typically targets elderly homeowners with aggressive sales tactics. Consumers allege the quality of work is poor.

CHARGES Police have arrested two men in connection with $50,000 worth of illegal drugs found in two southwest homes Tuesday. Dimitrios Guikas, 54, and George Donovan Brown, 48, were both charged in relation. Two women found with the men were not charged.

RELIEF Mount Royal University's School of Nursing will host a special screening of the film, Triage: Dr. James Orbinski's Humanitarian Dilemma, Jan. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Leacock Theatre, to raise money for Haiti relief. The 90-minute film is a documentary chronicling the humanitarian experiences of Nobel Peace Prize recipient James Orbinski. Admission to the event is free, however donations will be accepted for the Red Cross Haitian Relief Effort.

EXPLOSION An Alberta oilfield company has been fined $375,000 for a propane explosion that killed two workers more than three years ago. The pair were welding a container shut on June 30, 2006, at Fox Creek in northern Alberta when they were caught in an explosion caused by a leaking propane cylinder inside. Alstar Oilfield Contractors Ltd. received a total penalty of $375,000, of which $5,000 is allocated to a fine and victim fine surcharge.

METRO CALGARY

Quebec couple shot in Mexico recovering
A Quebec couple is recovering in hospital after being shot during a robbery attempt in Mexico, CBC News Online reports. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Canada

Feds to speed up Haitian adoptions

But immigration restrictions to remain

Haiti Crisis

Canada will speed some adoptions of Haitian children following last week's disastrous earthquake, but it won't loosen immigration restrictions to accommodate others escaping the chaos.

Officials will expedite adoptions that were already underway and had received preliminary approvals before the magnitude-7.0 quake struck Jan. 12, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said yesterday.

The federal government has tapped provincial authorities for lists of Haitian adoptions and it is consulting Haitian authorities on "fast-tracking" their foreign-adoption approval process, Kenney said.

About 100 adoption cases had been identified and all prospective parents were to be contacted by noon yesterday.

Once the Haitian government confirms the status of individual cases, Kenney said he's directed his officials to issue temporary resident permits — "an extraordinary measure" — to allow qualified Haitian children to enter Canada as quickly as possible.

"Regular processing fees will be waived and the federal government will cover health costs until they can be covered under provincial programs," Kenney said.

Ottawa is sending additional staff to Port-au-Prince to help with adoption cases and other immigration files, and it has set up an office in the neighbouring Dominican Republic.

"We are working urgently with the provinces to identify all of the relevant adoption cases that we can act on," Kenney said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto **Protesters rally against prorogation**

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Protesters demonstrating against the prorogation of Parliament gather outside the building where Prime Minister Stephen Harper attended a roundtable meeting in Toronto yesterday.

News in brief

ASSISTANCE The coastal town of Jacmel is abuzz with activity as its tiny airport is being turned into a new point of entry for disaster relief, bypassing the supply bottleneck in the Haitian capital.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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While he's got plenty of love for Canada, turns out UFC champ Brock Lesnar is no fan of our health care. Scan this code for the story.

Haitian-born cops head home

Haiti Crisis

MONTREAL A contingent of Haitian-born Montreal police officers is hitting the streets in quake-ravaged Port-au-Prince armed only with an unshakeable will to do whatever they can to help.

The group, which arrived yesterday, isn't wearing their uniforms or carrying their sidearms because their presence as police officers hasn't been formally requested by the United Nations, which is co-ordinating relief efforts.

The officers, accompanied by Montreal police Chief Yvan Delorme, are part of a group of 100 people travelling on a humanitarian mission to the Caribbean country where an estimated 200,000 people were killed by a massive earthquake last week.

Most of the 18 officers are Haitian-born and some haven't yet heard what happened to their own families. But Delorme said the group is well connected in that country. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Men hunted after cat stabbed and beaten to death

Police are looking for two men in their 20s after a cat was stabbed and beaten to death in Windsor. A witness reported seeing two men repeatedly stab and kick a plastic bag. The cat was found dead inside the bag. Animal welfare officials say the cat suffered four fractured ribs while it was still alive. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec phone giant offers free calls to Haiti

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
Metro Canada

A big Quebec telecommunications company has waived long-distance fees for people desperately trying to reach loved ones in quake-ravaged Haiti.

"This major community of people is trying to reach their own folks to see if they're alive …

"We're sure as hell not going to charge them," Vidéotron spokesperson Marc Labelle told Metro yesterday.

Other Canadian companies, however, are still charging fees.

Haiti Crisis

But Montreal-based Vidéotron says it is waiving all fees on calls made to Haiti from the moment the quake hit, and will continue until Feb. 12.

Officials from the big three Canadian landline and wireless providers — Telus, Rogers and Bell — admitted to Metro yesterday they have not waived charges on Haiti calls.

"We know phone calls are ineffective," said Bell spokesperson Jeff Meerman.

"… The destruction of the telecom industry (in Haiti) is pretty widespread. For that reason, people who are trying to get though just can't."

But Labelle said Vidéotron customers have placed "well over" 200,000 successful calls to Haiti. "We decided to open the valve."

U.S. firms Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile and Cricket Wireless also are offering free calls to Haiti.

Seizure sparks Games doubts

WHISTLER Lenders have seized the assets of Intrawest ULC — including the Whistler ski resort that will be home to the Olympic downhill races next month.

The seizure is sparking uncertainty about whether the Games will still be held on the property.

A public notice has been posted in newspapers by the company's lenders, which include Lehman Brothers, saying an auction will be held on Feb. 19, right in the midst of the Olympics.

Vancouver-based Intrawest, which is owned by New York private equity firm Fortress Investment Group LLC, reportedly missed payments last month that were due on a $1.4-billion US loan.

Intrawest has been struggling with financial problems since it was bought by Fortress in 2006 for $2.8 billion US in cash and debt. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Layton moves to curb PM

POLITICS The NDP says it will propose legislation to limit the power of the prime minister to suspend Parliament.

Leader Jack Layton says Parliament should be prorogued only when a majority of MPs in the Commons vote to allow it.

Chances of such legislation passing appear slim, but Layton is trying to capitalize on public anger over Prime Minister Stephen Harper's decision to suspend Parliament until March 3.

Critics say the move was designed to shut down debate over the Afghan detainee controversy. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Comment

Marriage – main cause of divorce

Relating

Is marriage good for you? The research continues. In San Francisco, the U.S. federal court hearing on California's Proposition 8, which prohibits same-sex marriage in the state, has heard expert testimony that significant health benefits accrue to married people relative to singletons, and the ban is putting gay people at greater risk of depression, suicide and substance abuse.

An economist also outlined the fiscal benefits for the cash-strapped state of letting gay couples marry, including increased consumer spending, school funding and tax revenue.

Meanwhile, a new analysis of U.S. census data by the Pew Research Center claims marriage is an excellent economic deal for men, whose income outstrips those who don't marry.

This is a change from 40 years ago, when a stigma, and vastly inferior salaries, greeted working wives. So married men typically took a financial hit relative to bachelors. Now, women have more education and make more money, often more money than the mister. What's in it for women now? Good question.

Some married people, I find, sell the joys of conjugality a little too hard, encouraging any couples who have been dating longer than a year to follow them to Hitchville post haste.

And then there are those who have taken an interest in the institution in general, like the Institute of Marriage and the Family Canada, which decried a recent "Divorce Fair" in Halifax, an event that put prospective splitters in touch with lawyers, life coaches and other professionals.

Institute spokesperson Andrea Mrozek lamented the haste with which couples now contemplate divorce instead of sticking it out, and accused the divorce fair of "capitalizing on moments of difficulty or despair in people's lives."

But where are the institute's warnings for those who marry in haste in the first place? What if this "difficulty or despair" is a product of being married to the wrong person?

Personally, I don't knock marriage, but neither am I likely to try it.

While it seems to work swimmingly for some people, contribute to healthier, happier lives and all that, it remains the leading cause of divorce.

Steve Collins offers his best guesses on relationships for Metro every two weeks.

Views

Sizing up fashion's plus-size model obsession

FourthWave

Fashion is a contentious cultural beast to wrestle with — its idealizing of the female shape is the source disordered eating and insecurity, but it's an economic powerhouse that is dominated by women as well. It's difficult for me to reconcile fashion's simultaneously destructive and creative capacity.

So it piqued my interest when I saw photos from V Magazine's "Size Issue," which hit stands last week. It's one of contradictions; one series, titled "One Size Fits All," invites comparison between two models — "straight-size" model Jacquelyn Jablonski and former-model-turned-plus-size model Crystal Renn are photographed in the same clothes and poses. An editorial titled "Curves Ahead" stars four plus-size models, while "V Love U Just The Way U R" features bigger and older gals, gender-ambiguous models, men and minorities.

The whole issue sounds a lot like an after-school special: We love you — you average woman that measures size 12 — even with your lumps, bumps, creases and cellulite. Perhaps, however, what the rest of us need is not a condescending pat on the head in a single, solitary magazine issue, but some acknowledgement that the fashion world is out of step with reality, and perhaps an act of contrition by changing that.

Rightly or wrongly, magazines and designers influence women's psyches and sartorial choices — and as the saying goes, with power comes responsibility. Size 0 models shouldn't be mandated to pack on the pounds, but they should reflect the breadth of our hips, butts and breasts.

The fashion industry does itself a disservice by not reflecting a range of body types — in fact, a 2006 British study found that average-sized models were just as effective at selling products as their skinny counterparts.

Are these inclusive gestures as token as the models they choose?

And why bother integrating them into the fashion world if all they're going to do is highlight how different they are?

As long as "plus-size" models are ghettoized in a special "Size Issue" and made an exception to the rule, the fashion industry and the women who follow it will never get over their complex of seeing fat as an aberration.

Canice Leung is a former editor of Ryerson University feminist magazine McClung's, copy editor at Metro, ardent feminist and loudmouth.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

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Irish bishops summoned to Vatican 9

Ireland's Roman Catholic bishops are being summoned next month to a Vatican summit with Pope Benedict XVI to shape the pontiff's response to child-abuse scandals. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

JAE C. HONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

People try to stay in line to get disaster relief supplies at U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division's base in Port-au-Prince yesterday.

U.S. deploys another 2,000 Marines to Haiti

Haiti Crisis

The U.S. Defence Department is ordering another 2,000 Marines to Haiti, diverting troops that were on their way to the Gulf and Africa.

Navy officials announced yesterday that the three-ship USS Nassau Amphibious Ready Group left port Monday for its regular deployment, but has been told to go Haiti instead for the earthquake relief effort.

The group is picking up Marines in the state of North Carolina and will include 2,000 sailors and 2,000 Marines when it gets under way for Haiti, perhaps as early as Thursday.

The first group of some 2,000 Marines already off Haiti's shore went on land for the first time Tuesday to help deliver aid. A Pentagon official says there are some 11,500 U.S. military personal in Haiti or offshore and 16,000 are expected by week's end.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tax deductions

- The U.S. House of Representatives has passed a bill allowing for faster tax breaks for U.S. donors to Haiti earthquake relief efforts. Under current law, donors would have to wait until they file their 2010 returns next year to take the deductions.

News in brief

CHINA A leading human rights group said yesterday that China openly harasses, targets and arbitrarily detains critics, disbars lawyers to silence complaints and detains petitioners in secret jails. Along with criticism of China, Human Rights Watch also said Western governments have gone soft on efforts to hold Beijing accountable.

MCCAIN/PALIN Sen. John McCain and Sarah Palin plan to campaign together in March, as he runs for his fifth term as Senator from Arizona. It will be their first such appearance since being running-mates in 2008. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SCANLIFE

Tension over blacklists and long memories are roiling Iraqi politics, and the U.S. is dispatching Joe Biden to help. Scan this code for the story.

Democrats licking wounds

MASSACHUSETTS Chastened by the Democratic Senate loss in the state of Massachusetts, U.S. President Barack Obama and congressional allies signalled yesterday they will try to scale back his sweeping health care overhaul in an effort to at least keep parts of it alive.

A simpler, less ambitious bill emerged as an alternative only hours after the loss of the party's crucial 60th Senate seat forced the Democrats to slow their all-out drive to pass Obama's top domestic priority and reconsider all options.

The 60-vote Senate Democratic majority is needed to overcome Republican procedural obstacles aimed at defeating the legislation.

No decisions have been made, lawmakers said, but they laid out a new approach that could still include these provisions: Limiting the ability of insurance companies to deny coverage to people with medical problems, allowing young adults to stay on their parents' policies, helping small businesses and low-income people pay insurance premiums and changing government health care for the elderly to encourage payment for quality care instead of sheer volume of services.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mass. shocker

- Scott Brown, a Massachusetts state senator with a low profile, was initially seen as a sure loser. But he became the first Republican elected to the U.S. Senate from Massachusetts since 1972, taking the seat held for 47 years by Ted Kennedy. The state's registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by 3-to-1.

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Court orders cathedral in France be handed over to Russia

A French court ruled yesterday that a Russian Orthodox cathedral built on the French Riviera nearly a century ago under Czar Nicholas II now belongs to the Russian government. The ruling by the Nice court is the latest development in Russia's bid to obtain ownership of Orthodox edifices around the world. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

More than 200 dead in Nigeria

Charred bodies with scorched hands reaching skyward lay in the streets and a mosque with blackened minarets smouldered yesterday after several days of fighting between Christians and Muslims killed more than 200 people.

13,500

Estimated number of Nigerians killed in sectarian violence since 2001

Sectarian violence in the central region of Nigeria has left thousands dead over the past decade, and the latest outbreak that began Sunday came despite the government's efforts to quell religious extremism.

The city of Jos was mostly calm yesterday, though terrified civilians kept indoors while soldiers patrolled the streets. The city is situated in Nigeria's "middle belt," where dozens of ethnic groups mingle in a band of fertile and hotly-contested land separating the Muslim north from the predominantly Christian south.

There are conflicting accounts about what unleashed the bloodshed. According to the state police commissioner, skirmishes began after Muslim youths set a Christian church ablaze, but Muslim leaders denied that. Other community leaders say it began with an argument over the rebuilding of a Muslim home in a predominantly Christian neighbourhood.

Corinne Dufka, West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch, said what caused the latest spark was beside the point. The deeper problem, she said, is the government's failure to address underlying conflict in the region. After similar bouts of violence in the past, Nigerian authorities have "come up with analysis, but they don't respond properly," Dufka said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Philippines **Caged protest by PETA**

PAT ROQUE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Schoolboys pass by members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), as they sit in mock cages to protest against the confinement of animals in front of the Manila Zoo yesterday.

News in brief

ITALY Premier Silvio Berlusconi said yesterday that his trials are like firing squads and he hasn't decided whether to appear in court to defend himself. Berlusconi faces charges of corruption and tax fraud in two trials tied to his media business empire. The conservative leader denies wrongdoing and has often lashed out at what he considers left-leaning and biased magistrates. Speaking to reporters in Rome, Berlusconi said that "if I appeared, I would find myself not in front of courts of justice but of firing squads." Defendants in Italy are not obliged to attend their trials. His comments came just after a law that could cut short his trials won initial approval in parliament. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Errors found in report on Glaciers

CLIMATE CHANGE Five glaring errors were discovered in one paragraph of the world's most authoritative report on global warming, forcing the Nobel Prize-winning panel of climate scientists who wrote it to apologize and promise to be more careful.

The errors are in a 2007 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a UN-affiliated body. All the mistakes appear in a subsection that suggests glaciers in the Himalayas could melt away by the year 2035 — hundreds of years earlier than the data actually indicates. The year 2350 apparently was transposed as 2035. The climate panel and even the scientist who publicized the errors said they are not significant in comparison to the entire report, nor were they intentional. And they do not negate the fact that worldwide, glaciers are melting faster than ever.

But the mistakes open the door for more attacks from climate change skeptics. The incident follows a furor late last year over the release of stolen emails in which climate scientists talked about suppressing data and freezing out skeptics of global warming. And on top of that, an intense cold spell has some people questioning whether global warming exists.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prostitutes demand licences

GREECE Dozens of prostitutes, most using headscarves or hoods to hide their faces, demonstrated in central Athens yesterday, demanding working licenses for brothels across Greece.

Prostitution is legal in Greece, and sex workers have personal permits to exercise their profession. But they can only do that by walking the streets, not using brothels. As a result, many end up working illegally and facing arrest because they operate out of brothels.

"We are here to put an end to our hardship and degradation," said Dimitra Kanellopoulou, president of Greece's sex workers' association, SEPE. "The situation is tragic, hypocritical and miserable."

About 100 sex workers held a rally outside the Interior Ministry, chanting: "We will not back down until we are given justice."

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Death toll rises to 10 as floods ravage Sinai Desert
Three more Egyptians died in flooding in the southern Sinai Desert yesterday, bringing the toll for three days of unseasonably heavy rains to 10, a health official said. Meanwhile, Bedouins angry the government was downplaying their losses clashed with security forces in South Sinai. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

How many died?

B.C. group questions toll in Congo conflict

Death comes easy in the Congo, but just how accurate are the fatal figures?

The Congo conflict has been dubbed the world's deadliest since the Second World War, causing 5.4 million deaths.

But a research group is challenging those figures.

The figure of 5.4 million deaths since 1998 was publicized by the International Rescue Committee, a private relief agency.

The UN Security Council cited IRC's figures when it decided to raise a peacekeeping force for Congo, which has grown to more than 20,000 troops.

But a new review released yesterday says the statistics themselves are questionable.

> **"In Congo, people were already dying in higher numbers."**
> Prof. Joshua Goldstein

The Human Security Report project at Simon Fraser University in B.C. found two major problems with the IRC's 2000 study:

- The Human Security Report rejected the interview-based sampling that was done in dangerous eastern Congo regions, arguing that the areas were not representative.
- It also questioned the figure the IRC used for the "normal" mortality rate in Congo. The IRC used the average mortality rate for sub-Saharan Africa, but some experts argue Congo's rate was higher even before the conflict.

"In Congo, people were already dying in higher numbers than in the rest of Africa, even before the war. And they continued to die in higher numbers after the war," said professor emeritus Joshua Goldstein of American University.

He estimates one million to two million Congolese died as a result of the conflict. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kandahar City **Smiles amid the conflict**

KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cpl. Stephanie Lanning from Clinton, Ark., of the 293rd Military Police Company out of Fort Stewart, Ga., meets Afghan girls during an information gathering operation in Kandahar City, southern Afghanistan yesterday.

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Terror syndicate a threat: Gates

WAR A syndicate of terror groups affiliated with al-Qaida might try to start a new war between India and Pakistan as part of an organized effort to sow upheaval across South Asia, U.S. Defence Secretary Robert Gates warned yesterday.

"I believe this operation, under the umbrella of al-Qaida working with all of these different groups, is intended to destabilize not just Afghanistan, or not just Pakistan, but potentially the whole region," Gates said.

Gates described the relations between Taliban groups and Lashkar-e-Taiba extremists accused of orchestrating the 2008 terror attack on the Indian city of Mumbai.

And he suggested the Pakistan-based militants might try a new terror assault on India to provoke a reprisal.

U.S. officials say one of their greatest fears is that Islamic militants who oppose the popularly elected governments in both India and Pakistan will find a way to get the nuclear-armed rivals fighting one another instead of the militants.

> **"I believe this operation ... is intended to destabilize ... the whole region."**
> Robert Gates

Gates praised his Indian hosts for restraint following the three-day terror siege of Mumbai, which India immediately blamed on militants inside Pakistan.

There were no reprisals, and Pakistan has charged seven men. Yet it might not be the same next time, Gates said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

India **Making holy waves**

RAJESH KUMAR SINGH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Hindu holy man takes a dip at Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers, on the day of Basant Pachami during the month-long Magh Mela in Allahabad, India, yesterday. Hundreds of thousands of devout Hindus bathe over 30 days to rid themselves of their sins and attain prosperity.

Killing site hid explosives cache

CARNAGE Bomb technicians discovered a "multitude" of explosives yesterday at the home of a man suspected in the shooting deaths of eight people.

Crews detonated the devices as more details about the gunman came to light.

Christopher Bryan Speight, a 39-year-old security guard, surrendered to police at daybreak after leading authorities on an 18-hour manhunt following the shootings at a house in rural central Virginia.

In the house, deputies found a mortally wounded man and seven bodies.

Speight had no weapons when he surrendered shortly after 7 a.m. wearing a bulletproof vest over a black fleece jacket, camouflage pants and mud-caked boots. Neither the sheriff nor police would disclose what Speight said.

Speight, who was jailed while awaiting charges, co-owned and lived in the home where some of the bodies were found.

Neighbour Monte W. Mays said Speight's mother deeded the house to Speight and his sister in 2006, shortly before she died of brain cancer.

Mays said Speight was a good neighbour. They waved as they passed each other on the road and sent their dogs out to play with one another. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

News in brief

PASSAGES Environmental group Sierra Club has named its first new leader in 18 years — an activist who once took over the intercom of a Home Depot to tell customers not to buy lumber from ancient forests. Michael Brune, 38, replaces Carl Pope in March. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Buffett to keep stake in Kraft

Warren Buffett says he still doesn't approve of Kraft's $19.5-billion acquisition of Cadbury, but he doesn't plan to sell his stake in the company. Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway is Kraft's largest stockholder and he has been vocal in his belief that Kraft overpaid for the European chocolate and gum maker. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

The next generation of marketing yourself

Job seekers, entrepreneurs, real estate agents, lonely singles: The market for Catharine Fennell's business, in her view, is unlimited.

Fennell's company, The Original VideoBIO Inc., is in the business of making low-cost high-quality video for people who want to communicate their brand in a professional manner.

Sure, anyone can upload a video to YouTube.

But with VideoBIO, Fennell says, clients get a professionally shot and scripted three-minute video that can be hosted on her website, www.videobio.com, or embedded in the clients' online resume, dating profile, website and emails.

Catharine Fennell

"I would say any video production company can produce any kind of video," Fennell said. "But nobody's doing them the way we are.

"We're selling a concept that allows people to plug their personal message into a video medium that wasn't accessible or affordable before," she said. The basic price, she adds, is $299. Now, Fennell's company has added authors to its list of clients. The Toronto-based company has signed a deal with book publisher Harper Collins Canada to produce video bios to go with its author releases this year.

Fennell is operating out of studios in Toronto and New York. But she has plans to roll out more locations across North America, she says.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Austria **Admiring Lohan**

RONALD ZAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Anastasia Sokol, left, new girlfriend of prominent Austrian businessman Richard Lugner, centre, and his daughter Jackie Lugner look at a photo of Lindsay Lohan yesterday at a news conference in Vienna, Austria. Lohan will be Lugner's special guest at this year's Opera Ball Feb. 11.

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In brief

INFLATION Canadian inflation remained tame in December, taking the steam out of the loonie's recent surge and giving the Bank of Canada even less reason to move off historically low interest rates. Statistics Canada said the annual inflation rate ticked up to 1.3 per cent in December — three-tenths of a point less than expectations — but even that low figure exaggerates the upward pressure on prices.

NEWSPAPER The New York Times says it will charge readers for full access to its website starting in 2011, a risky move aimed at drawing more revenue online without driving away advertisers that want the biggest possible audience. The potential pitfalls have made most other major newspapers hesitant to take a similar step. But after months of deliberation, the Times said it will use a metered system, allowing free access to a certain number of articles and then charging users for additional content.

BEER The world's largest brewer, Anheuser-Busch InBev SA, shut down production in its home country yesterday, in an escalation of a standoff over job cuts with its Belgian workers, which is causing beer shortages in shops.

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From protests to proposals, the Olympic torch relay has been surprising, and sponsors have reaped publicity. Scan this code for the story.

INFORMATION FEATURE

Invest online with ease at RBC

RAFAEL BRUSILOW
for Metro Canada

Online investing is easier than ever thanks to the changing face of online investors and the powerful tools put in their hands.

Jason Storsley, president and CEO of RBC Direct Investing, says the changes the online investing industry has gone through in a few short years have been staggering as the profile of the online investor has undergone a metamorphosis that defies stereotype.

"The profile of your average online investor has really changed over the last five years. It used to be mostly male investors just looking for the best stock prices, now there is a much wider range of people looking to secure their financial futures online," Storsley said.

The proof is in the numbers which show a sharp rise in the number of new investors flocking online to sites like rbcdirectinvesting.com.

"Our net new account growth is up more than 30 per cent. I think the key reason is that it's never been easier to get started as an online investor. There's a wide range of knowledge and wide range of experience at your fingertips. It's a lot easier for investors now to come in and build a strong portfolio," Storsley said.

The powerful tools offered by RBC Direct Investing have played a big part in the influx of new online investors, Storsley says, and RBC sees itself as an equal partner involved in every part of the investing relationship.

"We really see RBC Direct Investing as a partnership — we don't leave investors on their own. We recognize that our role is to help investors build confidence in their portfolios to meet their financial goals," Storsley said.

"We really see RBC Direct Investing as a partnership — we don't leave investors on their own. We recognize that our role is to help investors build confidence in their portfolios to meet their financial goals."
Jason Storsley

Independent research and performance index links on the RBC site arm investors with crucial knowledge to make strong investment choices while prepared investor profiles let you jump into an investment strategy fitted to your needs and goals which has already been pre-screened by RBC experts.

Features like RBC Practice Accounts, which let you test the waters using fake money in a real context, take a lot of the guesswork out of the online investing process and get acclimatized to the act of investing.

RBC's sophisticated asset mix calculator cuts through the confusion of creating a healthy, diversified portfolio by offering suggestions by trained experts on which investments to make, in what amounts, depending on your particular investor profile.

It's all about putting the power of strong investing directly into the hands of online investors themselves by making direct investing easier to understand and take control of.

"We've done a lot around helping our clients improve their financial literacy and investment knowledge. Investors are looking for more than just low cost — they're looking for tools and education so they can be confident that the decisions they're making are the right ones," Storsley said.

According to Storsley, RBC's youngest registered online investor is 11 years old, proof that age or prior investment experience are no barriers to getting started with online investing.

"Because of the advancements in technology, we're able to put very powerful tools in the hands of investors. For those looking to take control, it really has never been easier to become an online investor," Storsley said.

For more information, visit rbcdirectinvesting.com.

RBC's Direct Investing program helps investors build confidence in their portfolios to meet financial goals.

Online ease

- Unlike the early days of online investing, modern online investors represent a wide cross-section of society with an almost equal split between men and women and a variety of young, old, new and experienced investors making use of online investment tools.
- Many more Canadians are choosing to manage some or even all of their investments online, with self-directed investors comprising roughly 15 to 20 per cent of all Canadian investors and the number of new online investors is growing rapidly.
- While trading stocks is still a common trend among online investors, pursuit of long-term investments and financial goals is more popular than ever among self-directed investors.
- With powerful investing education and analysis tools available online at rbcdirectinvesting.com, more investors than ever are finding the process of investing online easier and just as effective as offline.

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Cornish re-signs with Stamps
Canadian-born running back Jon Cornish re-signed with the Calgary Stampeders yesterday. Cornish, of New Westminster, B.C., was scheduled to become a free agent Feb. 16. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sports

Kobe's jersey still top seller

Kobe Bryant, left, has retained his spot atop the list of the NBA's bestselling jerseys, while young stars Dwight Howard and Derrick Rose moved into the top five. Howard vaulted to No. 3 from No. 10 behind LeBron James. Rose, last season's rookie of the year, climbed to fourth from No. 11. Dwyane Wade was fifth. The list is based on sales at the NBA Store and nbastore.com since the start of the season. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

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SCANLIFE

Handing franchise face Eric Staal the "C" is only the beginning of big changes for struggling Hurricanes. Scan this code for the story.

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Flames in Sutter's doghouse

Coach holds meetings, intense practices to shake up slumping club

NHL PREVIEW
Blackhawks at Flames

Brent Sutter has had enough.

The Calgary Flames coach put his players through an intense practice yesterday to prepare for tonight's home game against the Chicago Blackhawks.

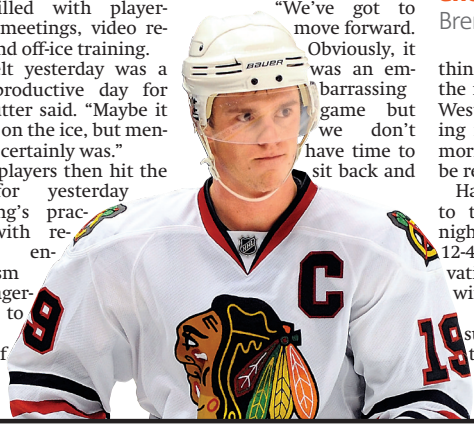
"You get to a point where enough's enough," said Sutter, whose squad has lost five straight. "To be quite frank, that's kind of where I'm at right now."

A day after dropping a 9-1 decision in San Jose to the Sharks Monday night, the Flames (26-28-6) returned home Tuesday for a day filled with player-coach meetings, video review and off-ice training.

"I felt yesterday was a very productive day for us," Sutter said. "Maybe it wasn't on the ice, but mentally it certainly was."

The players then hit the ice for yesterday morning's practice with renewed enthusiasm and eagerness to break out of their recent funk.

"I think we addressed it yesterday in our meeting," said forward Nigel Dawes. "We've got to move forward. Obviously, it was an embarrassing game but we don't have time to sit back and think about it. We've got the next best team (in the Western Conference) coming in here to play us tomorrow and we've got to be ready for them."



Chicago's Jonathan Toews

"You get to a point where enough's enough."
Brent Sutter

Having lost 4-1 in Ottawa to the Senators Tuesday night, the Blackhawks (34-12-4) also have extra motivation to return to their winning ways.

"We have our own issues," said Chicago captain Jonathan Toews.

"We haven't played great hockey the last couple games, but we're going to stay positive and bounce back with a lot of energy (today) because we know that nothing's going to be easy, that's for sure. We're going to have to work our butts off and go out there and earn it."

Chicago coach Joel Quenneville said he's disappointed with his squad's play of late, especially against the Senators. "That might have been the worst game we played all year, so we want a response," said Quenneville.

Chicago has skated to six straight regular-season wins over Calgary. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Pistons owner exploring sale of club
Detroit Pistons owner Karen Davidson says the option of selling the NBA franchise is being explored. Forbes valued the Pistons at $479 million US last month. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

QMJHL The Quebec Major Junior Hockey League announced yesterday it will unveil "disciplinary measures" for Patrice Cormier, a forward with the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies, Monday. Cormier earned country-wide attention this week for elbowing Mikael Tam during a game and sending the Quebec Remparts player to hospital.

SOCCER Arsenal recovered from two goals down yesterday to beat Bolton 4-2 and move atop the Premier League. Arsenal joined Chelsea — which has a game in hand — on 48 points, one more than defending champion Manchester United. Tottenham stayed in fourth place despite a 2-0 loss at Liverpool.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

St. Louis 4 Montreal 3 (OT)
Vancouver 3 Edmonton 2 (OT)
New Jersey 2 Florida 0

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Milwaukee 113 Toronto 107
Atlanta 108 Sacramento 97
Charlotte 104 Miami 65
Dallas 94 Washington 93
Detroit 92 Boston 86
Orlando 109 Indiana 98
Portland 98 Philadelphia 90
Oklahoma City 94 Minnesota 92
New Orleans 113 Memphis 111
Phoenix 118 New Jersey 94
Utah 105 San Antonio 98
Denver at Golden State
Chicago at L.A. Clippers

No escaping the past

Indy's Week 16 loss to New York is a topic the Colts can't hide from

NFL PREVIEW

Jets at Colts

Peyton Manning is on a simple mission this week: Strike fast, stay on the field and take the Colts back to Miami.

The four-time MVP and his Colts teammates can't wait for the journey to begin.

Nearly a month after then-undefeated Indianapolis set off a national firestorm by yanking its starters early against the New York Jets, Manning & Co. will get another chance at them in this weekend's AFC championship game — even if nobody lets them forget what happened the first time.

"Do you expect to play all four quarters this week?" Manning was asked jokingly before he could even settle in at the podium yesterday.

ANDY LYONS/GETTY IMAGE

Peyton Manning's Indianapolis Colts are one win away from a trip to the Super Bowl in Miami.

"I do, yeah," Manning deadpanned, drawing laughter.

But in Indianapolis, this is no laughing matter.

Furious fans deluged local radio talk shows following Indy's 29-15 loss in Week 16, and fans weren't the only ones upset.

After the game, four-time Pro Bowl centre Jeff Saturday said he understood why Indy's home fans booed, other players seemed surprised by coach Jim Caldwell's decision to pull players early and Manning insisted nothing should be read into his body language even though he uncharacteristically kept his helmet on for most of the final 20 minutes that day. Since then, players and coaches have reached a consensus that they may not be playing in their third AFC title game since 2003 had they not done it this way.

"Really, we've tried to focus in on the things that we thought were in the best interest of our team to get us into the position we are right now," Caldwell said. "That was the ultimate goal." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manning vs. Ryan

- Since 2005, Peyton Manning has gone head-to-head with Jets head coach Rex Ryan — who was previously a defensive co-ordinator — five times. Manning completed 82 of 132 pass attempts for 1,136 yards with nine touchdowns and two interceptions. He is 4-1 in those games — the only loss coming in December after Manning left with a 15-10 lead.

Weather no help to Olympic planners

VANCOUVER 2010 Games

GAMES Winter Games officials have given up on any help from Mother Nature and will now be trucking in snow for the freestyle skiing and snowboarding events at Cypress Mountain, on Vancouver's North Shore.

The forecast for the week ahead suggests there will be no new snow for the mountain, nor will it get cold enough to allow them to make any, organizers said yesterday after their final board meeting before next month's Games. "We are planning that we will not have snow," said Cathy Priestner Allinger, executive vice-president of sport and Games operations for the organizing committee.

Contingency plans are now being rolled out, which include using straw and wood to take the place of snow to build the base for the courses.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Silver for McIvor
Canada's Ashleigh McIvor won a silver medal at the skicross World Cup yesterday. She finished behind Marte Hoeie Gjefsen of Norway in the final at Blue Mountain in Collingwood, Ont. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vancouver Games

EDITOR: DON.MCHOULL@METRONEWS.CA

Plenty of snow in Whistler

Twice what's needed for Olympic events, with even more expected

KRISTEN THOMPSON
Metro Canada

Whistler's Olympic Park is all ready to welcome athletes, three weeks before competition starts.

Unlike Cypress Mountain, which has been cursed with a lack of snow, the biathlon circuit has twice the amount it needs and planners are expecting more snowfall before the Games start, said John Alder, general manager of Whistler Olympic Park.

"We are ready at all the competition areas," Alder said yesterday. "They are being groomed daily."

The Park will host 28 medal events in biathlon, cross-country skiing and ski jumping, the first time in Olympic history all three events will be held at one venue.

John Heilig, ski jump manager, said the venue has 32 pipes with coolants running under the snow, keeping it cold in the warm, damp weather.

"The fog isn't an issue," he said. "Our biggest challenge would be really heavy snowfall."

Whistler's Athletes' Village is also in its "finishing touches" phase, with housekeeping staff working on putting sheets on beds and kitchen crews prepping the massive dining hall, which will serve 11,000 meals a day.

"This is a very exciting time for us," said Tim Morrison, general manager of Whistler Village. "(In a matter of weeks), this will be the home of the world's best athletes."

The Whistler Village will also have a bank, retail outlets, a multi-faith centre, high-end gym and a small — but fully functional — hospital.

Resort problem

- Lenders have seized the assets of Intrawest ULC, including the Whistler ski resort that will be home to the Olympic downhill races next month.
- Vancouver-based Intrawest, which is owned by private equity firm Fortress Investment Group LLC, reportedly missed payments last month that were due on a $1.4-billion US loan.
- Olympic organizers said they're confident that the Games will go on.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO CANADA

John Heilig, ski jump manager, stands at the base of the ski jump venue yesterday at the Whistler Olympic Park. Heilig said the venue is ready for athletes, three weeks before the Games begin.

McKeever on verge of history

HINTS DROPPED Brian McKeever wasn't ready to celebrate yet, but Canada's cross-country ski federation strongly hinted yesterday that the Canmore native will make history as the first winter-sport athlete to compete in both an Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Cross Country Canada issued a release stating the complete Olympic team will be announced Friday in Canmore.

The organization all but announced McKeever's appointment to the team by saying "the contingent of athletes will include the world's first winter-sport athlete who will compete in the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in the same year."

McKeever, a visually impaired skier and the winner of four Paralympic gold medals, has been striving to also compete in the Olympics. He won a 50-kilometre Nor-Am trials race at the Canmore Nordic Centre last month.

"Until it's been officially announced to me and the public, I'm not willing to say anything until I have full confirmation," McKeever said yesterday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Metro Homes

Mingle time

With space for hors d'oeuvres and a wine glass, the Great White Mingling Plate makes hand shaking and re-fueling with second helpings easy. Pottery Barn, $9, potterybarn.ca.

JENNIFER BILL/FOR METRO CANADA

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

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Kid needs a decor upgrade?

Some helpful tips and letting teenagers be themselves on a budget

HomeScape

Sylvia Putz

metronews.ca/homescape

Are the pinks and blues blanketing the rooms of your children wearing on their nerves? Here are some tips on redecorating their room in their vision — with your watchful eye.

As a teenager, I remember having pink elephant wallpaper in my closet.

My parents finally took pity on me and outfitted me with a groovy orange wallpaper throughout when I was 12. Was I relieved or what? My girlfriends could no longer hoot with derision at what was left of my childhood wallpaper.

These memories drift through my head as I contemplate the increasingly loud jockeying from both of my children, who are fast outgrowing any hint of sweet childhood in their choice of bedroom decor.

It's inevitable, and a rite of passage for all offspring who can no longer be happily lumped into the "child" category.

At this time of transition, the teen bedroom becomes increasingly important, and as more than a place to sleep and do homework. It becomes a place of refuge, and a place where they can chill with friends, away from the constant gaze of adult supervision (but not too far from it).

From the point of view of decor, it should give them a chance to develop a sense of who they are, all the same, parental limits are sometimes necessary, especially when it comes to budget. But negotiations with teenagers must be handled delicately. Here are some guidelines to make the process as smooth as possible:

The Exploration

- Encourage teenagers to explore websites and check magazines and books for pictures of what they like.
- Tell them not to worry much about budgetary or other limitations at this point; that will come later.

Back to reality

- You as the payer of bills must decide on a budget ahead of time. After your teenager has explored ideas, let your teenager know what the family can afford.
- If the wish list includes new furniture but the budget does not make provisions for this, consider repainting, or reupholstering, for example.
- If the list is too long for the budget, set priorities.
- Try to remain as open as possible. A black accent wall is not the end of the world.

More options

- If your teen has expansive plans for a small space, it may help to zero in on the actual physical dimensions of the bedroom and together, explore and identify necessary and desired activity or functional "zones." Consider different configurations before you decide there is not enough room for any particular "zone," such a socializing corner with throw pillows, for example.
- Stay away from themes in large pieces of interior decor, such as rugs or bedding or wall treatments. Teenagers change quickly and a much-desired theme (say, DJ graphics) may prove an embarrassment to them next year when they decide they're into other things. Use inexpensive themed accessories that may be changed without too much financial pain.

–SYLVIA PUTZ

Sylvia Putz is a journalist with an interest in decor and design. She's written for the TV show Arresting Design; sputz@arrestingdesign.com.

How about Valentine's insulation?

HOME RENO This Valentine's Day, you may be wondering what to give your loved one to show just how much you care. If you are tired of giving flowers or chocolates year after year, it may be time to get creative with a sentimental gift like a home renovation.

If you've been delaying a home renovation like insulating your basement, the government grants available will help reduce the cost of the project. On top of this, insulating your basement just became a whole lot easier with the Owens Corning Cel-Lok System insulation panels and PINK FIBERGLAS insulation batts. Installing Cel-Lok panels can be quick, easy and done in no time because of their lightweight, durable quality and easy interlocking panels.

NEWS CANADA

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Aria Lace Cutout Coasters ... cushion cups or glasses in style. Available in white, black and red, these coasters are cut from stain-stemming ornamental felt. Urban Barn, $5 for set of four, urbanbarn.ca. JENNIFER BILL/FOR METRO CANADA

Based on a 50-year-old design and handmade in Czech Republic, the Encased Amber Flute is a deeply golden flower held in place between a slim stem and a ridged, mouth-blown bowl, while this Backyard Champagne Flute is handmade in Poland. Anthropologie, both $19.35, anthropologie.com.

Drinks on us!

JENNIFER BILL
for Metro Canada

Dirty Martini, Cosmopolitan, Grey Goose on the rocks — the very thought can make one smack their lips in anticipation.

Mix in chic decor, a bartender in the know, and a lively mix of people, and you've got yourself a cocktail party, where the little black dress is always welcome and wine, beer and the mixed cocktail — traditional or trendy — are the featured players of the evening.

Celebrity designer and trend expert Marc Atiyolil said a cocktail party's decor should be carefully chosen to create the desired mood.

"I personally love a contemporary setting ... A 'back to nature' colour scheme using white and lime green paired with shades of brown is quite popular," said Atiyolil, editor-in-chief of Canadian Home Trends magazine.

"Too little colour makes it look plain and boring and too much colour will look like you are hosting a party for your 5 year old. Opt for two to three colours that work well together and your place will exude a stylish yet sophisticated look."

Accentuate your elegant side and play up the ambiance with dainty floral arrangements, floating candles in vases or tumblers, and mirrored serving trays. Or turn it down a notch and create a chill lounge to maximize mingling. Dim the lights, dot the periphery with tea lights, and choose mood music.

The EZ Pull 6-Drink Server is a stainless steel six-head dispenser with chrome finishing and a suction base for sturdy balance that rotates easily. With a spill and leak proof push-up pouring mechanism, it can be used for 750ml or 1l bottles. Canadian Tire, $49.99, canadiantire.ca.

Fill this party-sized Glass Drink Dispenser with sangria, punch or any iced thirst-quencher. Pottery Barn, $115, potterybarn.ca.

Why stir when you can shake! The stainless steel Bullet Cocktail Shaker is a sleek and stylish way to shake up a martini. Holds 22oz. Urban Barn, $32, urbanbarn.ca.

Make professional cocktails right at home with this stainless steel bar set, which includes strainer, stirrer, jigger, can opener, ice tong and ice bucket. Canadian Tire, $29.99, canadiantire.ca.

For those who like to keep things simple and not take up too much space, this artistic and abstract Level Wine Rack holds 4 bottles in perfect balance. Urban Barn, $40, urbanbarn.ca.

This modern Step 6 Bottle Wine Rack is a practical and decorative piece, made from chrome plated wire, to easily display your wine while keeping bottles safe. Urban Barn, $28, urbanbarn.ca.

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Claiborne closing Canada division
Liz Claiborne Canada Inc. has an agreement with Laura Canada to assign the majority of its retail store leases across the country. And, Claiborne retail stores in Canada will close gradually from February until the end of October 2010. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Style

Go glam for patriotism

Show your Olympic support with style by sporting Foxy Original's new "Go Canada" necklace and earrings collection. Fifty per cent of the net proceeds from online sales of the pieces go to the Canadian Association for Advancement of Women and Sport. Available starting next month, each retail for $25 at foxyoriginals.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

6 Trends for spring '10

JANINE FALCON
for Metro Canada

"Fashion's eclectic and edgy fall was in part a reaction to the economical times," says stylist and lifestyle expert Janette Ewen, who is a regular on CityLine.

This spring is taking on a less aggressive, more feminine personality, she says, which is still influenced by the recession, but more about escape. Here are six trends that hit the highlights:

1. The Jacket

Yep, the tough girl is still around, with her bold shoulders, distressed jeans and military jackets, which, says Ewen, have "softer lines, a Boer-era styling in beaten-up green and khaki." Military jackets were strong at Balmain, with long tails and elaborate epaulettes and Burberry Prorsum, which featured sharp, trenches in army beige. Safari-style toppers also stood out at Aquascutum.

2. Pale Neutrals

Shades of nude, blush pink, pastels, misty grey and white married with sheer, airy and drapey textures lend vulnerability rather than provocation at Antonio Berardi, Calvin Klein and Alberta Ferretti. "It's a visible-lingerie look, with a '20s and '30s soft silhouette, shaped without boning," explains Ewen.

3. Brights

Statement shades of yellow, red, purple and green accents pop against a white palette at Bottega Veneta, and broadcast a playful vibe with splashy prints at Marc by Marc Jacobs and Blumarine, and Lady Gaga-esque graphics at Alexander McQueen. Orange is a hot hue; it hit the catwalk for Lanvin, Donna Karan and others.

4. Short Hemlines

Mini skirts and dresses give legs more airtime as warmer weather approaches. Look to Chanel's short-skirt suits, Proenza Schouler's swingy frocks — just about every designer hit at least above the knee this season. As well, shorts from walking-length to wee strutted down the catwalk at Phillip Lim, Costume National and more.

5. Ruffles

Ruffles and ruching made the detail-difference in the aforementioned military and safari jackets and added glam and at times girly flourish at Stella McCartney, Chanel, Lanvin and Marc Jacobs. "There's a Lolita look this spring — whimsical, sweet and innocent rather than seductive," Ewan says.

6. Prints

"Florals, roses, cabbage flowers — they're everywhere," Ewen notes. Flowers bloomed at Rebecca Taylor, Derek Lam and Luella, and mixed with tribal at Diane von Furstenberg.

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IT'S NUDE

Bare esssentials for close encounters

Heady This rose and peony fragrance casts a spell in five minutes — make that two. Guerlain Idylle Eau de Perfum Spray ($104 for 50mL, guerlain.com)

Be mine Underneath it all. Club Monaco Pearls on Chiffon necklace ($59, clubmonaco.com)

Second skin This nail polish is worthy of its own love story. YSL La Laque in Beige Chiffon ($24, at Holt Renfrew, Murale and the Bay)

Flash and lace The look of love. Underwear, La Senza (So Free Bra, $39.50; Ooh La Lace panties, $12.50, lasenza.com)

STUDIO ANDRÉ DOYON

What lie beneath Isn't that a sexy thought? Double-breasted trench, Mango ($170, Mango.com)

Hot to trot With this sleek Celine shoe, you don't walk — you strut, sauter or stroll ($875, at Holt Renfrew, holtrenfrew.com)

Hold me close The tools of seduction deserve the perfect purse. Ruched clutch, Jenny Bird ($360, jenny-bird.com)

SWEET DREAMS

Brad Rudin is calling for a style revolution. "We want to do for sleepwear what Bob Dylan did for folk music," says the co-founder and creative director of Bamjamz, a new loungewear and sleepwear line that debuts at Holt Renfrew stores across Canada in February. "It's about energy, youthfulness and waking up in the morning with a smile on your face." That might sound like a tall order, until you feel the fabric — an ultra-soft bamboo blend that is naturally wickable, breathable and thermal regulating.

PHOTOSHOP

Revlon Photo Ready Foundation in Cool Beige ($18.95)

The latest foundations mean that everyone — TV anchor or not — can look great in HD. Revlon's new Photo Ready Foundation uses photochromatic pigments to minimize pores and flaws for an airbrushed finish, even if you're bathed in unflattering fluorescent light. And, if your makeup bag is already vibrating with a turbo mascara, make room for another battery-powered product that promises pixel-perfect skin: Lancôme's Ôscillation PowerFoundation.

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Parker to partner with Halston?

Sarah Jessica Parker and Halston may be banking on fashion sequels: The storied designer label reportedly has hired the Sex and the City star in a creative role.

Halston is tapping Parker for its newly announced Halston Heritage collection, a less expensive extension of its signature collection, according to Women's Wear Daily.

The company wouldn't confirm reports of the partnership, but did say an announcement of some sort was forthcoming within the next week. There was no immediate response to an email to Parker's publicist Friday.

Halston's glitzy image from its heyday of the disco era — with the late Roy Halston Frowick turning out jersey jumpsuits and the like for the Studio 54 crowd — had become tarnished in recent years with a disappointing relaunch in 2008.

Parker, meanwhile, found herself without a home for her own once-popular line Bitten after retail partner Steve&Barry's filed for bankruptcy and closed its doors.

But Parker is still considered one of the most influential celebrities in the fashion world and insiders think she and Halston would make good co-stars.

Sarah Jessica Parker.

"If she is to come to Halston, I know that she will do an incredible job and finally get the brand back to being a Halston that is respectful of Mr. Halston and his legacy but also move it forward to what women today want to wear," says stylist and commentator Mary Alice Stephenson.

Parker's style-icon SATC character Carrie Bradshaw has already been shown in the trailer for Sex and the City 2 in a white dress from Halston Heritage, a brand extension with retail prices ranging from $55 to $595.

Marios Schwab remains the designer for the main line, which has a slot on the calendar at New York Fashion Week in February.

Halston couldn't have hired just any boldface name as a partner, says Stephenson, who styled Parker for a memorable Harper's Bazaar cover with the actress - in Chanel - running across the Brooklyn Bridge. "She's probably the only actress who could pull this off."

"There would be no one better to revive that label."
Suze Yalof Schwartz, Glamour Magazine

Lindsay Lohan was tapped as artistic adviser to Emanuel Ungaro with much fanfare last fall; just weeks later her work for the label was trounced by fashion critics.

"There's a big difference from this than Lindsay Lohan," says Suze Yalof Schwartz, Glamour magazine's executive fashion editor at large. "Lindsay's name isn't synonymous with fashion, whereas when you think about Sarah Jessica Parker, you think about the clothes."

Schwartz considers Halston lucky to have Parker: "There would be no one better to revive that label."

To view photos of Matthew Williamson's new spring menswear collection, visit: **metronews.ca/style**

Cowell inks $500M deal with Sony
Simon Cowell has signed a $500 million US deal with Sony. The two-year contract with the entertainment giant will see him rake in the staggering sum — expected to tip his fortunes close to the $1 billion mark. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

Entertainment

Grammy tribute
In an unprecedented move, this year's Grammys will pay homage to Michael Jackson in a tribute that will include a 3-D film clip the pop sensation made before his June 25 death. **PEOPLE.COM**

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Crazy Heart, but sensible sound

Crazy **Heart**

Album: Crazy Heart Soundtrack
Label: New West/Universal
Rating: ●●●½

IT'S A GIVEN that a movie about a washed up country singer would have an excellent soundtrack. Especially if the music is supervised by T-Bone Burnett. Crazy Heart's soundtrack is loaded with fantastic songs by legendary artists — Hello Trouble by Buck Owens, Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way by Waylon Jennings, If I Needed You by Townes Van Zandt — but it's the original music sung by Jeff Bridges, Colin Farrell and Robert Duvall that really make this an interesting disc. Bridges' gruff voice on the bluesy country tune Hold on Now is a must hear.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Spoon

Album: Transference
Label: Merge
Rating: ●●●●

WHEN A BAND comes perilously close to mainstream success, as Spoon did with its last disc, the group can go one of two ways: Play to the masses or retreat. Britt Daniel's latest falls somewhere in between. The band's new stripped down sound is immediately apparent on the first listen. It's sparse, the choruses and verses aren't as distinct, and the group stays mostly mellow throughout. But, on closer inspection, the hooks that propelled the band forward the last few years are still there. It's still clean, refreshing pop and proves that increasing fame hasn't changed the band.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Jeff Bridges stars as a washed up country singer in Crazy Heart.

Ringo **Starr**

Album: Y Not
Label: Universal
Rating: ●●●

A BEATLE DESERVES the best and Ringo gets it from an all-star cast of collaborators that includes Ben Harper, Joe Walsh, Van Dyke Parks, Dave Stewart, Gary Wright, Richard Marx, Don Was, Joss Stone and, of course, Paul McCartney. At 69, Ringo takes over production duties for the first time in his long career, as well as much of the song writing. Some of the compositions seem a tad ham-handed or contrived (Peace Dream — his tribute to John Lennon — in particular), but the album is carried by the Beatle drummer's unflappable charm and good nature. Standouts include Ringo's duets with Sir Paul (Walk With You) and Joss Stone (Who's Your Daddy). Beatle fans will enjoy Ringo's nostalgic The Other Side of Liverpool. This is Ringo's best effort since the '70s.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

On the web

- Read our reviews of Editors' In This Light and On This Evening, Hawksley Workman's Meat & Milk and Delphic's Acolyte at metronews.ca/music.

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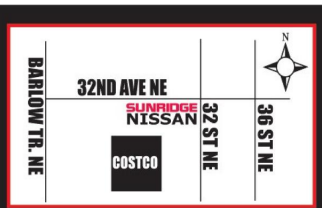

NISSAN

Daper dandies

GQ magazine is declaring that Johnny Depp is the Most Stylish Man in the World ... or at least one of them. Also on the list are Robert Pattinson, Tom Brady and Brad Pitt. You can vote for your pick at GQ.com. **POPEATER.COM**

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Brittany's mother says daughter died of natural causes, not drugs

CELEBRITY DEATH A month after her sudden death, Brittany Murphy's mother and husband say they are convinced the actress died of natural causes, not drugs or an eating disorder.

In an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday, Sharon Murphy and Simon Monjack said that Murphy did not use drugs or alcohol and that they are awaiting a determination from coroner's officials that will end speculation prescription medicine caused Murphy's death on Dec. 20 at age 32.

Murphy had mitral valve prolapse, a common condition where a heart valve does not properly close, but doctors said the actress "would live a long and healthy life," Monjack said.

"She had a fear of dying," Sharon Murphy said. "She would not take too much caffeine. She wouldn't even have a glass of champagne on New Year's. She was just high on life, and people see that as something else I guess."

Murphy, the star of varied films such as Clueless, 8 Mile, Sin City and the television series King of the Hill, was buried in a private funeral on Christmas Eve. At the service, Monjack told mourners that the actress was his best friend and soul mate, sentiments he repeated during the Tuesday interview.

Authorities continue to investigate her death but do not suspect foul play. An autopsy was inconclusive and coroner's officials are awaiting the results of toxicology and tissue tests before determining what killed the actress.

The pair worked frantically to save Murphy's life the morning she died, as revealed in a heart-wrenching emergency call where Sharon Murphy implores, "Brittany, please come back!" as Monjack performs CPR.

Monjack and Sharon Murphy remain in the Hollywood Hills home where Brittany Murphy collapsed a month ago. DVDs of some of Brittany Murphy's films lay near the entertainment centre, and several framed photographic portraits of the actress that Monjack shot adorn the walls and other areas of the living room.

"I'm comforted by these photographs," Monjack said. "I'm comforted by the transformation from girl to woman that I witnessed."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A marriage in Creation

Paul Bettany and wife Jennifer Connelly play Mr. and Mrs. Darwin in new film

ANNE BRODIE
for Metro Canada

Real life husband and wife Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly play Charles and Emma Darwin in Creation, the historical biography about the struggles of a marriage and society under intense strain.

Personal tragedies and Darwin's landmark research that cast doubt on the existence of God took a heavy toll on his pious wife. Hardly a picnic for the actors, but they're justifiably proud of their work.

Darwin circled the globe developing his theory of evolution, published in 1859 as On the Origin of Species. He said that life evolved through natural selection not through God's intelligent design. His book revolutionized 19th century thinking and remains one of the most important "discoveries" in human history.

According to the film, Darwin held off publication for Emma's sake and because of his severe depression over the loss of their daughter Annie, who was said to be the "apple" of his eye and his muse. Creation is based on keepsakes of Annie that Darwin collected that his great-great-grandson Randal Keynes Darwin discovered in 2000.

Bettany says he was keenly aware of the responsibility of playing one of the greatest, most innovative modern thinkers.

"He's been dead for a long while, so no one can really challenge me. There is so much research available to you that it's intimidating, and frustrating, because you always think the answer's in the books, the pile of books that you still haven't read. I can't possibly deliver the human being who possibly came up with the arguably the greatest idea human beings have ever come up with, I can't bring that intelligence for real.

"But I know about loss, I do know about madness, and I do know about relationships, and I do know about children. I know about those things and I know what they feel like and those things ground me. And then I try to look intelligent staring at particles!"

Emma Darwin was a "charming, intelligent, and cultured cousin" who was often perceived as cold. "As a mother she really suffered the losses of her children," says Connelly. "I think obviously it was devastation for her, but it was imperative that she be represented as strong and formidable as she was, so I endeavoured to portray a woman with great restraint and dignity. She didn't indulge her suffering but she felt very deeply these losses ... It was an effort to restrain it and keep it in. That is the way the Victorians were."

Director Jon Amiel says Connelly knew the unsympathetic role was risky. "Many actors are undone by their need to have the audience love them. Emma was to outward appearance quite stern and intensely reserved but an intensely emotional woman underneath. What's so moving is often when a character is unable to display an emotion, we feel it on her behalf. Jen's restraints in playing her made her so intensely moving."

Bettany's wades into vastly different territory in the vampire horror fantasy Legion, also in theatres tomorrow.

"Our vampires are very different," he says. "They're much more animals. I love vampire movies, I love zombie movies, and it's a bit of a guilty pleasure."

Paul Bettany in Creation

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SECOND CUP

Creation and Legion are both in theatres tomorrow

Music makes Fantastic Mr. Fox moments

MUSIC IN FILM As the credits of Wes Anderson's Fantastic Mr. Fox began to roll and the Bobby Fuller Four's Let Her Dance blared through the theatre at a recent showing of the movie, a young girl leapt to her feet and joined the on-screen characters, dancing in the aisle.

The endings of his films — from Bottle Rocket to The Royal Tenenbaums — constitute some of the most indelible final reels in recent moviemaking. They almost uniformly conclude in a poetic moment of togetherness, perseverance and, often, a wink of mischief. (Spoiler alert)

After a long battle both with the farmers and within his fractured, idiosyncratic family, Mr. Fox — though scarred — triumphs. His family is still stuck underground, but Mr. Fox discovers how they'll survive. The film ends with the group dancing in the aisles of a grocery store, owned by the same farmers bent on the animals' destruction. The ending came from Dahl's original manuscripts, not the published version.

"It was only when we had the song did I get, 'Here's what the mood is, here's what we're going to walk out of the theatre with,'" says the 40-year-old director. "The scene exists because of the song."

Anderson's endings are almost like distillations of his entire work. Again and again, he meticulously creates characters of wit, audacity and melancholy.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bettany in Legion

Boyle opens up to Oprah

Susan Boyle wants the world to know that she isn't crazy. During an interview on the Oprah Winfrey Show, Boyle brushed off all those reports that she was unable to deal with being transformed into an international star. POPEATER.COM

Die Stadt Muzikanten is the new album from Calgary-based band Woodpigeon, which is fronted by Mark Hamilton, above.

Woodpigeon takes flight

BRYAN BORZYKOWSKI
for Metro Canada

The day before Woodpigeon's new album came out, Mark Hamilton — the band's singer — was in his Calgary home, getting ready to lie down after a rough day. He sounds tired, only getting excited when he brings up leaving Alberta.

"I've been pretty lucky the past couple of years," he says. "I've spent five months out of the year away from here playing in places I want to go to."

His family keeps him in the city, and while Hamilton doesn't seem to mind the city too much, he admits he doesn't really fit in.

"Calgary's not the most open city," he says. "It has a million people with one gay bar."

Perhaps his more closed environment is one reason Hamilton hasn't addressed his sexuality on his records. That is, until now. On his latest disc, Die Stadt Muzikanten, the singer — who says he "doesn't live in the closet, but I don't run around with the rainbow flag in my back pocket either" — gets more specific about gender than he has in the past.

"For a gay singer to be referring to gender, for me, that's a big thing," he says. "I've always said stuff like 'I love you', but I've never used gender before. On this CD I wanted to be very specific. This is who I am."

Although he wasn't hiding anything before, he says, writing this album was liberating. "In my head, when I say I love someone I'm saying I love another man. If I'm singing about this honestly, then why shouldn't I document that?"

"I've always said stuff like 'I love you', but I've never used gender before. On this CD I wanted to be very specific. This is who I am." Mark Hamilton

That honesty comes through on a number of tracks — Our Love Is as Tall as the Calgary Tower is a haunting tune about losing a lover, while ...And as The Ship Went Down is also about a troubled relationship.

"I found myself writing songs that were about growing up past 30 and thinking about relationships I had in my life," says Hamilton.

Overall, the record — which was inspired by his grandparents' life in Austria during World War II and their move to Canada — is easily Woodpigeon's best. Similar to Grizzly Bear, Hamilton layers his tunes with rich vocal melodies, delicate instrumentation and lots of reverb. It's all very infectious and easy on the ears.

It's also Hamilton's ticket out of Calgary, and a life he once hated. A few years ago the artist was working as a writer at a stock photography company. "Anytime anyone would come talk to me, all I though about was I hate you," he says.

He quit, got into music more seriously and realized he can still get by. Now he works part-time at a library, travels for half a year and hasn't looked back.

"I worked a proper job and it's not something I ever want to go back to," he says. "I get to wander around the world — I don't see anything wrong with that life."

In Concert

- Woodpigeon plays Broken City on Friday and McEwan Hall on Saturday.

Jay-Z, Springsteen, Urban join lineup for Haiti telethon

MUSIC The music world's top stars are signing on for Friday's Hope for Haiti telethon.

Bruce Springsteen, Jay-Z, Taylor Swift, Justin Timberlake, Keith Urban and Alicia Keys are just a few of the performers who will be featured, according to MTV Networks.

Haiti was devastated and thousands of its citizens killed when an earthquake hit the Caribbean nation last week. Hope For Haiti Now: A Global Benefit for Earthquake Relief will be an international event. Haitian native Wyclef Jean will anchor the show from New York, while George Clooney will do so from Los Angeles. CNN's Anderson Cooper will report from Haiti.

London has also been added to the lineup, and that's where Jay-Z will perform, along with Bono, The Edge and Rihanna in a special joint performance.

The Hope for Haiti benefit will be televised on all the major networks, as well as MTV, VH1, CMT, BET, PBS, CNN, Bravo, and a host of other networks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Buddha adds meat
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Urban Foodie

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Rating: 🌐🌐🌐½
Dinner & drinks for 2:
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Like a diner's comfort menu of burgers and fries, Hong-Kong style cafés offer a consistent, economical spread of noodles and rice dishes.

Pebble Street is part of a company that operates a handful of similar restaurants (including Calgary Court and Sun's BBQ) in Calgary. Most dishes hover around $10.

There are an endless variety of specials throughout the day from weekend breakfasts, lunch deals, and dinner combos. You could point to any tent card on the table and come away with a delicious, filling meal.

Dishes run the Asian gamut from Cantonese to Malaysian to Thai.

The baked Portuguese chicken ($10.99) has influences from Macau, a hearty dish of breaded, boneless chicken in a creamy sauce, with hints of lemon, cheese and coconut, over rice.

You'll find yourself spooning bowl after bowl of this.

On the web

- Get recipes and more great food content at metronews.ca/recipes

A heaping plate of duck fried noodles ($10.95) is enough for two people plus leftovers.

Savoury shredded duck meat is mixed with meaty shiitake mushrooms and bits of red peppers and Chinese greens.

A neat bonus is the ability to order dim sum from Forbidden City, the adjacent Chinese restaurant.

Rice crepe wrapped around a Chinese donut ($5.50), drizzled with hoisin and peanut sauces, is always a treat.

ANDREE LAU/FOR METRO CALGARY

Baked Portugese chicken ($10.99)

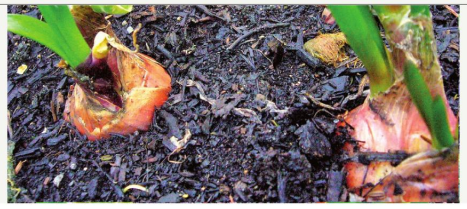
Dining out

THINGS WITH DRINKS
Have munchies with drinks at Spur Gastropub (351 4th Ave. S.W.), where bison dry ribs are $5/lb. every Thursday (2-7 p.m.) and oysters are 25 cents each every Friday til 7 p.m.

ANDREE LAU/
FOR METRO CALGARY

Global Peasant blog online

- Diane Thompson is always in hot pursuit of something good to eat. Share her enthusiasm for food as she travels and experiments with a new recipe every week in her Global Peasant blog. In it, she explores a variety of culinary interests accompanied by mouthwatering images.
- Check out metronews.ca/globalpeasant to learn about unearthing onions in January.



In brief

FUNDRAISER Calgary's best wine merchants and chefs join forces Jan. 30 at 7:30 p.m. for the Wine Stage, the annual fundraiser for the One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre at the Hotel Arts. Tickets ($99) available through the Epcor Centre box office.

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Avatars hit the workforce

For many companies, sci-fi characters are superior to humans

ELIZABETH BRAW
for Metro World News

In real life Byron Reeves is a bald academic. But Reeves also conducts research using with as his avatar, a strapping man with hair.

"Lots of companies already use avatars," explains Reeves, a psychology professor at Stanford University. "Using avatars, you can conduct meetings, meet clients and have brainstorming sessions without having to travel. In fact, you don't even have to leave the building. And you don't risk getting swine flu from shaking hands with an avatar."

Reeves, who specializes in human interaction with avatars, is the author of Total Engagement: Using Games and Virtual Worlds to Change the Way People Work and Businesses Compete.

Today companies like IBM, Cisco, SAP and Boeing use avatars — 3-D characters whose age, gender and appearance the user chooses — to interact with colleagues and customers around the world.

"Thousands of people at IBM meet every week through their virtual characters," notes Reeves. "Even recruitment is done with avatars."

Soon the 3-D characters may inhabit less technology-driven workplaces, too.

Don't laugh: she may be sitting over in the next cubicle.

"Avatars will take over repetitive and boring tasks that humans find unfulfilling," predicts Reeves. "Humans still have to direct the avatars, but working through them is much more fun."

Reeves's experiments show that people are more stimulated — and their hearts beat faster — when directing avatars than when doing the tasks themselves. Office environments, too, can be spiced up in 3-D.

But Avatar, the movie, won't take over Planet Earth any time soon.

"The avatars in the movie are real-life characters, while the avatars we have now just live in a 3-D computer world," explains Reeves. "On the other hand, there are things I can do with my avatar that the people in the movie can't do!"

Avatar – the movie version – is still playing in theatres everywhere.

3-D Dilemma

• As many as one in 10 cinema-goers are blind to the groundbreaking 3-D effects of James Cameron blockbuster Avatar. A number of vision defects affect the ability to see the extra dimension of depth meaning millions are left wondering what all the fuss is about. According to experts, somewhere between five and 10 per cent of people are unable to see in 3-D. Even being slightly "cross-eyed" can affect the enjoyment of the 3-D experience.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Broken Social Scene singer offers clue about new album

INDIE For Broken Social Scene fans continuing to wait for the Toronto collective's long-awaited fourth studio album, collaborator Amy Millan offered a new detail yesterday.

Millan said that she recorded a track with Leslie Feist and Emily Haines for the disc, marking the first time the three Canadians had worked together on the same song.

"That was really fun," Millan told The Canadian Press in a telephone interview. "We all met up in Toronto."

Details have been few and far between on the new album, the band's first since 2005's self-titled record.

Members of the group have been recording in Chicago with producer John McEntire of Tortoise and the Sea and Cake, but were coy about providing any information about the record when interviewed in December.

"We've been really enjoying the whole process," Brendan Canning said then.

Of McEntire, he added: "It's a long journey we're on together. Trying to make music always is."

However, she doesn't think the new record will be called The Black House, the Blue Sky as has been rumoured by fervent fans on the Internet.

She said discussions about the title were ongoing.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Entertainment in brief

OSCARS Contenders for best foreign-language film at this year's Oscars have been narrowed down to nine, including Golden Globe winner The White Ribbon from Germany. But Canada's official entry, I Killed My Mother (J'ai tue ma mere) by Quebec director Xavier Dolan, failed to make the cut.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences says a committee of several hundred members selected the nine films from 65 that qualified in the category.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spiderman caught in new director's Webb

BLOCKBUSTERS Sony Pictures and Marvel Studios announced Tuesday that the (500) Days of Summer director Marc Webb will helm the next Spider-Man film following the departure of Sam Raimi and Tobey Maguire, the director and star who worked on the previous three Spidey films. The fourth installment is set for a 2012 release and will focus on a younger version of the superhero.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

In brief

REALITY Canadian chef Michael Smith is headed to Iron Chef America to do battle in kitchen stadium. Food Network Canada says the host of Chef Abroad and Chef At Home will face off against New York celebrity chef Bobby Flay on Jan. 31, where the pair will concoct a meal using a secret ingredient. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kenya's Style
Kenya Hunt
Read the blog at metronews.ca/kenyasstyle

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	- 370 16 KHQ	College Basketball Pepperdine at Gonzaga. (Live)				Community (N)	Parks/Recreat	The Office (N)	30 Rock	Jay Leno Show
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	602 568 23 W	House-Sell	House-Sell	Supernanny		Dine With Me	Love It-List It	Confidential	Confidential	Divine Design
	521 560 24 TLC	American Chopper (N)		BBQ Pitmasters (N)		American Chopper		BBQ Pitmasters (HDTV)		Amer. Chopper
	603 561 25 FOOD	Extreme Cuisine, Jeff Corwin		Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Restaurant Makeover		Diner, Drive-In	Unwrapped	Extr. Cuisine
	615 520 26 A&E	The First 48 (HDTV) (N)		Manhunters	Manhunters	Manhunters	Manhunters	(10:01) The First 48		The First 48
	617 522 32 SHOW	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	Relic Hunter		*Odysseus and the Isle of the Mists* (2008, Fantasy)				CraSh & Burn
	601 562 33 SLICE	Bootcamp	Last 10	Re-Vamped		ET Canada	What Happen?	Real Housewives-Atlanta		Housewives
	- 633 34 ENC2	(7:15) *The Operative* ★ (2001, Action) Brian Bosworth.				*GoldenEye* ★★★ (1995, Action) Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean.				*Tomorrow Nvr*
	520 505 35 DISC	Dirty Jobs		MythBusters		Daily Planet		Dirty Jobs "Tofu Maker"		Dirty Jobs
	620 523 36 BRAVO	*Know Your Mushrooms* (2008)			O'Reagan File	Law & Order		Without a Trace		*Morvern Callar*
	294 650 40 WPCH	Law & Order: Special Victims		*Aeon Flux* ★★ (2005, Science Fiction) Charlize Theron.				The Office	*Aeon Flux* ★★ (2005)	
	626 547 41 COM	Just for Laughs		Air Farce	22 Minutes	Corner Gas	Name Is Earl	The Simpsons	South Park	Demetri Martin
	- 539 42 TCM	(6) *Point Blank* (1967)		*Escape From Alcatraz* ★★★ (1979, Suspense), Jack Thibeau				*Seven Miles From Alcatraz*		*Experiment*
	628 584 43 SPIKE	TNA iMPACT! (HDTV) (N)				Dangerous Police Chases		MANswers	GameTrailers	MANswers
	522 516 45 HIST	Ancestors	Ancestors	Pawn Stars	Pawn Stars	Ancient Discoveries		Ancestors	Ancestors	Nostradamus
	627 528 46 SPACE	*Android Apocalypse* (2006, Science Fiction) (DVS)				InnerSpace (N)	Stargate SG-1		Star Trek: Next Gener.	
	- - 47 AMC	(6) *Get Shorty* (1995)		*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* ★ (1992, Comedy), Luke Perry				*Get Shorty* ★★★ (1995, Comedy)		
	619 525 49 TROP	Planet Soap	Comeback	Reality	Whatever	Family Guy	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show
	600 564 50 HGTV	House-Bryan	Real Renos (N)	House Hunters	House Hunters	Holmes Inspection		House-Bryan	Real Renos	Holmes-Homes
	501 391 52 CTV	CTV News Tonight		CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News	CTV News
	504 508 70 BNN	Squeeze Play		Business News	Commodities	Market Call Tonight		Headline	Commodities	Squeeze Play
	526 507 92 VIVA	The Closer		Cold Case "Detention"		Psychic Inv.	Ghostly Enc.	Judging Amy		Missing
	269 350 93 APTN	Wapos Bay	By the Rapids	Hockey	Moose TV	*The Replacements* ★★ (2000, Comedy) Keanu Reeves, Gene Hackman.				
	- - 94 MCP	World News	News	Sewing Maid	Immortal Yi, So	Vancouver	Shaktimaan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Connections
	571 581 100 MMM	Freddie Mercury Tribute		Entourage	Wild 'n Out	mmtop10.ca		Freddie Mercury Tribute		Entourage
	570 580 101 MM	Video on Trial	Muchmusic Countdown			MuchOnDemand		Pimp My Ride	My Own	Video on Trial
	581 566 102 MTV	Jersey Shore		Jersey Shore (N)		Jersey Shore Reunion		The Real World		Jersey Shore
	- - 116 TV5	(6) Complément d'enquête		Humanima	Hors série	TV5 Le Journal	(9:35) Arte reportage		(10:20) ADN	Brique

critics' corner

Know Your Mushrooms

Ron Mann ("Grass," "Tales of the Rat Fink") applies his cheeky filmmaking style to the fungus among us with this documentary, which is packed full of fun facts about mushrooms — from the mundane to the magic kind — and the people who love them. Centered around an annual festival of fungi in Colorado, it introduces such colorful figures as Larry Evans, the "Indiana Jones of mushrooms." 7 PM on BRAVO

Mounties Under Fire

It's not the first police force to be touched by scandal and allegations of corruption, but given its size and the many roles it plays, the RCMP is a bigger target than most. This new documentary offers a warts-and-all inside look at the Mounties, juxtaposed with the stories of three recruits training to join the force, providing a ray of hope for change within the organization. 9 PM on CBRT

She's still holding out for her true love, Jack Daniels

Kate Moss would like to elope with Jamie Hince, femalefirst.co.uk reports. The supermodel reportedly received a proposal from The Kills rocker on her 36th birthday last Saturday but insisted she doesn't want to marry him yet. **METRO WORLD NEWS**

Celebrity Buzz

Amy sentenced to two years of 'good behaviour'

THEN THE COURTHOUSE ERUPTED INTO GALES OF LAUGHTER, THE JUDGE BOWED AND SAID, 'THANK YOU. I'LL BE HERE ALL WEEK.' Amy Winehouse has pleaded guilty to common assault and disorder, female-first.co.uk reports.

The singer appeared in Milton Keynes Magistrates Court yesterday morning to answer charges relating to an incident last month, where she lashed out at a theatre manager after interrupting a performance with a foul-mouthed outburst.

The troubled star was given a two-year conditional discharge and ordered to pay more than $150 in costs and more than $200 in compensation to her victim.

Passing sentence, district judge Peter Crabtree said it was clear alcohol had played a massive part in the incident.

He said, "Mr. Pound is a person whose job involves interaction with the public. If he's assaulted he deserves the court's protection. In this case it's obvious that alcohol played its part."

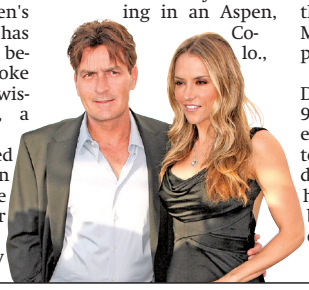
The judge said he felt the sentence was appropriate because it would force the singer — who has a history of drug abuse problems — to maintain good behaviour. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Brooke's wisdom tooth delays Sheen case

THE LAST THING SHE NEEDS IS TO HAVE MORE WISDOM REMOVED A hearing this week in Charlie Sheen's domestic violence case has been delayed two days because his wife Brooke Mueller had to have a wisdom tooth removed, a source tells People.

"She has been ordered by the doctor to stay in bed for 72 hours," the source close to Mueller says.

Mueller's attorney had filed court papers asking that she be allowed to attend Wednesday's hearing in an Aspen, Colo., court by telephone, but the judge instead set the session for Friday because the law requires both Mueller and Sheen to appear in person.

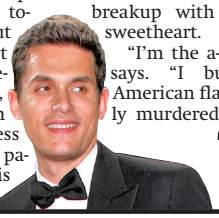


Sheen, 44, was arrested Dec. 25 after Mueller called 911 saying the actor threatened her. A judge issued a temporary restraining order against Sheen keeping him away from Mueller but not their 10-month-old sons. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Mayer confirms what we already know

STRAIGHT FROM THE DONKEY'S MOUTH John Mayer isn't proud of the way things ended with Jennifer Aniston, usmagazine.com reports. "I've never really gotten over it," he tells the latest issue of Rolling Stone. "It was one of the worst times of my life."

The singer, 32, first got cozy with the actress, 40, in April 2008 after spending five sexy days together in Miami, but went on to split twice — most recently last January, in which he held an impromptu press conference with paparazzi outside his NYC gym to, as he hints, take the blame for the breakup with America's sweetheart.



"I'm the a—hole," he says. "I burned the American flag. I basically murdered an ideal." **METRO WORLD NEWS**

Lohan mom under fire again for bad parenting

AND IN OTHER NEWS, THE SKY IS BLUE AND JOHN MAYER IS ANNOYING Lindsay Lohan is allegedly abusing herself again, sources tell Radar Online. A suspicious red mark was spotted on the actress' arm as she headed to a party at the Chateau Marmont recently with mom Dina Lohan, and sources allegedly say it's proof that Lindsay is cutting — something she's been accused of in the past.

"Why is Dina out partying with Lindsay when it's clear she's still cutting herself?" the source asks. "Dina should be getting Lindsay help, not following her to parties." **METRO WORLD NEWS**

Kournikova's mother charged with child neglect

IS HER MAIDEN NAME LOHAN, BY ANY CHANCE? Anna Kournikova's mom, Alla Kournikova, is in hot water after allegedly leaving her five-year-old son at home alone in Palm Beach to run errands, during which time the boy fell or jumped out of a second-story window, according to WPTV in Florida. The boy was reportedly found crying, screaming and bleeding by neighbours, and Alla was arrested and charged with child neglect. **METRO WORLD NEWS**

Woods rehab pic sends handlers into frenzy

UNLESS HE WAS HOLDING A CUP OF BOOBS, I FAIL TO SEE THE PROBLEM HERE A new paparazzi image of Tiger Woods has surfaced (see it on RadarOnline), potentially ruining his handler's plan to release a carefully staged photograph of Tiger with his wife and children looking happy together, popeater.com reports.

"At the moment it's all about regaining control of the golfer's image," an insider tells popeater.com. "The plan was to let an appropriate time pass and then issue one photograph wide to everyone in the media showing the family back together.

"This was not the first picture of Tiger his handlers wanted the world to see. This is another PR nightmare for him."

In the paparazzi photo, Woods is seen looking at the camera, holding a cup and covering his head with a hooded sweatshirt. It's the first photo of the golf great since his Thanksgiving Day car wreck that led to his infidelity scandal. He's now reportedly in a Mississippi sex addiction clinic, according to Radar. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Follow these celebrities on Twitter...

CelebTweets

JON FAVREAU wants to play dress-up, **PARIS HILTON** recognizes some of her family members in a movie, and **IVANKA TRUMP** demonstrates her business pedigree.

@Jon_Favreau Visited the Thor set. I would look cool in one of those costumes.
@ParisHilton Just finished watching 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' the movie ha-ha
@IvankaTrump Drove by a car dealership w/ a huge sign saying "Our best deals of the year." It's Jan 19th, how good a deal can that be?

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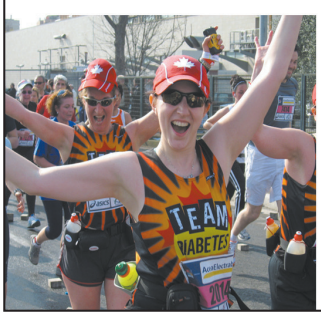
Canadian Diabetes Association



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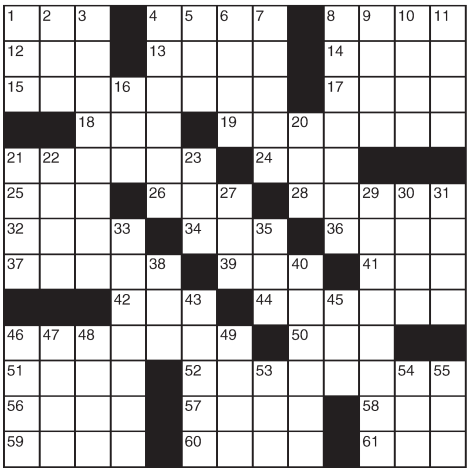
Today Mostly cloudy 0 C / -8 C
Friday Sun in afternoon 0 C / -8 C
Saturday Mostly cloudy 1 C / -9 C

BT BREAKFAST TELEVISION

Andrew Schultz, Meteorologist – Breakfast Television
"I get to spread the word on how your day, evening or weekend will shape up with our ever-changing weather here in Alberta." **WEEKDAYS AT 6 A.M.**

Take Five



Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

		1	5		9	8		
7		9				4	5	
				1	6			
				2	7	5		3
6								2
5		2	6	3				
			7	4				
	5	8				3		7
		6	3		8	9		

ACROSS

1 — -jongg
4 Visibility hindrance
8 Be a model
12 Sch. org.
13 Ugandan despot
14 Easter emblem
15 Sharp turns
17 Shaving cream add-in
18 Knock
19 Surmised
21 Nicklaus contemporary
24 Corrode
25 Foreman rival
26 Pinch
28 Incenses
32 Equivoques
34 Tie up the phone
36 Manage somehow
37 Modify
39 Knight's address
41 Once called
42 Scull need
44 Big Mac or Whopper
46 Fame
50 Doo follower
51 Diner employee
52 Terrier type
56 Heche or Hathaway
57 List-ending abbr.
58 401(k) alternative
59 Stagger
60 Say it ain't so
61 Roulette bet

DOWN

1 Speedometer stat
2 — standstill
3 Tiny, as a fracture
4 Occur
5 Parisian pal
6 Pizzazz
7 Follow as a result
8 Credit cards
9 Rembrandt creations
10 With 11-Down, having dark peepers
11 See 10-Down
16 Aries
20 Corn spike
21 One of the Three Bears
22 Astringent
23 Horse and buggy, e.g.
27 — de deux
29 Classical-music lover
30 Foil's cousin
31 Crystal gazer
33 Diver's aid
35 Chest protector
38 Pop
40 Without courtesy
43 Used 42-Across
45 "Go, team!"
46 Cicatrix
47 Sound quality
48 Top-notch
49 Wee parasite
53 Scooted
54 Anger
55 "Way cool!"

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

A	C	T		P	O	S	E		A	B	E	D		
T	O	O		I	R	O	N		C	I	A	O		
O	A	F		C	A	N	D	Y	C	O	R	N		
P	L	U	C	K			S	E	E					
			A	L	E	S		T	S	A	R	S		
C	A	N	D	E	L	A	S		S	U	E	T		
A	P	E		D	E	L	I	A		L	E	A		
M	E	A	D		C	A	N	D	I	D	L	Y		
E	X	T	R	A		D	O	J	O					
			E	L	F			U	N	Z	I	P		
C	A	N	D	L	E	M	A	S		E	R	E		
A	G	O	G		E	A	S	T		S	A	N		
R	O	D	E		T	O	S	S		T	N	T		

4	6	1	7	3	2	5	9	8
3	7	9	6	8	5	2	1	4
5	2	8	4	1	9	6	3	7
2	9	7	8	5	6	1	4	3
6	8	5	1	4	3	9	7	2
1	3	4	2	9	7	8	5	6
7	5	2	3	6	1	4	8	9
8	1	6	9	7	4	3	2	5
9	4	3	5	2	8	7	6	1

On the web

For more games and 60 additional daily cartoon strips, visit metronews.ca

Metro Recipe of the Day

STEPHEN MACLEOD

Fresh Healthy Tomato Cabbage Soup

Submitted by Irene Leung, Port Dover, ON

INGREDIENTS:
1/4 wedge of cabbage (green or red)
2 fresh tomatoes
1 carton (1 litre) of chicken broth
1 Slice (1/8 inch thick) of fresh ginger
1 splash of hot sauce (optional)

METHOD:
1. Pour entire carton of chicken broth into a large saucepan and add a slice of ginger into it and bring to a boil.
2. While the broth is boiling, cut cabbage into 1/2 inch strips and cut tomatoes into wedges.
3. Put the cabbage, tomatoes and hot sauce (if using) into the hot broth and bring to a boil.
4. After it has been boiled, simmer for about 5-10 minutes until cabbage is tender and tomatoes have broken down in smaller chunks. You can add salt and pepper to taste if desired but I find the salt in the broth is enough.
5. Ladle soup, cabbage and tomatoes into bowls and serve piping hot with crackers or a slice of crusty bread.

SERVES 2-4

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES
COOK TIME: 15 MINUTES

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Horoscopes by Sally Brompton sallybrompton.com

For Sally's expanded daily and weekend horoscopes, visit metronews.ca

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
If you can't handle something alone then by all means ask for assistance. Friends and family will rally round if you ask them. So ask them.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
You will find it easier than ever to make a good impression, but don't try too hard — make it seem as if you are doing them a favour.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
The truth must be told and you are the one who must tell it. Don't be afraid to point out where the so-called experts are wrong.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Your attitude towards an issue that involves money, investments or property will harden today and you will refuse to make changes.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
Spell out what it is you are going to be doing over the next few weeks and what it will mean not just for yourself but for other people too.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
You must let certain people know that you do not exist merely for their convenience.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
You will find the confidence to make changes today, and the sooner you start making them the sooner you will see the results that you long for.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Cosmic activity in the domestic area of your chart will make it easier for you to explain to others some of the actions.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
You will find it remarkably easy to get people to do what you ask of them today

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
Forget about flattery, forget about threats — colleagues will respond best to facts and figures.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
There can be no more excuses for putting off things that should have been finished by now.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Solar and planetary activity in the most sensitive area of your chart means you must consciously and continually strive to stay cheerful.

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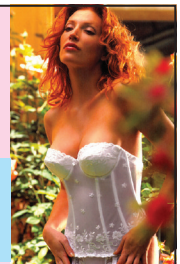
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